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[redacted] (b)(3)

Robert BOULIN FRANCE
(Phonetic: booLAN)

Minister of Labor
(since April 1978)

Addressed as:
Mr. Minister

A well-known political figure who has served with distinction under four prime ministers, Robert Boulin has held eight different Cabinet posts during the last 17 years. Before assuming his current portfolio, he worked closely with Prime Minister Raymond Barre as Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in Charge of Economy and Finance (1977-78). A longtime Gaullist, Boulin is politically allied with Jacques Chaban-Delmas, a liberal Gaullist whom he backed for the Presidency against Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in 1974. Boulin nevertheless has Giscard's confidence, and like the President, he would like to see a broadening toward the center-left of the present majority coalition of Gaullists, Republicans and Centrists.

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(b)(3)

A Firm and Skillful Negotiator

[redacted] He apparently has a reputation as a dynamic and resourceful politician, ready to take the risks involved in tackling difficult problems. As Agriculture Minister (1968-69), he was noted for his courage in proposing much needed but unpopular reforms to encourage marginal producers to leave the soil and seek more useful occupations. With the equally difficult portfolio of Public Health and Social Security (1969-72), he was able to bring about a minireform, known as the Boulin Plan, within the social security program. He also devoted much time and energy to fighting France's growing drug problem. Because of his well-refined talents as a conciliator, Boulin twice was given the important post of Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister for Parliamentary Relations (1972-73, 1976-77).

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Career

During World War II, Boulin served with Gen. Charles de Gaulle and was active in the Resistance. Educated in law, he has practiced in the city of Libourne, where he has also been mayor since 1959. Boulin first entered the National Assembly in 1958, as a deputy from Gironde, and he has been reelected ever since. He is especially proud of his 13 years (1961-73) of consecutive service in Gaullist Cabinets, a record unequaled by any other party member. His earlier Cabinet posts include those of Secretary of State for Repatriation (1961-62), Secretary of State for Budget (1962-66), Secretary of State for Economy and Finance (1967-68), and Minister of Civil Service (1968). Also active in business affairs, he has served as a high-ranking executive in the Perrier beverage firm.

The 58-year-old Boulin is married to the former Colette Lalande. They have two grown children, Bertrand and Fabienne. For relaxation, Boulin enjoys horseback riding. His proficiency in English is not known.

14 September 1978

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